

STATE FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD
Saturday, June 6, 2020
Via Microsoft Teams (*per Covid-19 protocol*)

MINUTES

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Julie Gasaway, Vice-Chair, at 9:37 a.m.

Attendees:

Present: Bruce Brannan, Jim Deitz, Art Endres, Julie Gasaway, Jakki Kolzow, Sylvia Pender, Gordon Pike, Kevin Ruegg, Grant Smith, Lina Wallen, Pam Warren, Dick Westby.

Excused/Absent: Valerie VanAuker, Carol Bigos, Sharon Mayes, Tom McAlpin

Staff Present: Shantelle Bagnall, Lori Dennison, Charles Gray, Sandy Guizzetti, Florence James, Caroline Lutt-Owens, Sarah Morales, Esma Murrieta, Daisy Santacruz, Victoria Stevens

Guests: Steve Kahn, John Bugg, Joy Blackmon, Barry Isaacson

Approval of Minutes:

Motion: To approve minutes from the March 7, 2020 meeting.

Moved by: Lina Wallen; **Seconded by:** Grant Smith and Dick Westby.

No discussion.

Action: Motion passed unanimously.

Introductions/Announcements:

Speaker: Lori Dennison, *FCRB Program Manager*

Summary of Discussion:

Introduction of Florence James, Program Specialist I who started in February 2019; Daisy Santacruz, Administrative Assistant who started in February 2020; and Sarah Morales a Program Specialist III who started in March 2020. An interesting fact about Sarah, she has only completed virtual boards due to the start of the pandemic.

The Phoenix Office still has a Program Specialist I vacancy and Caroline and Lori are starting second interviews.

Committee Reports:

Executive Committee

Speaker: Lori Dennison, *FCRB Program Manager*

The Executive Committee met this morning. They approved four Leaves of Absences/Attendance Waivers. Lori gave the committee a brief update.

Best Practices Committee

Speaker: Julie Gasaway

The Best Practices Committee has not been able to meet due to Covid-19. The committee has been working on updating the Findings and Elements. The draft went to the staff in October for review and the comments have now been returned to the committee. The committee will go over the comments and consider the suggestions and work toward moving the draft forward for final approval.

Community Outreach Committee

Speaker: Kevin Ruegg

The Outreach Committee has been continuing its efforts to raise awareness about the FCRB program and fill the vacancies on its Boards.

Articles:

As a follow up the March report, we spoke about our outreach to local newspapers in rural areas with immediate recruitment need. Articles were published about the FCRB in the local Yuma, Kingman, and Flagstaff newspapers. As well as the Tri-Valley Newspaper that serves several cities within Pinal County. We received a

steady stream of application requests. However, we were hampered by the fingerprint process due to the pandemic and resulting lockdown as well as the transition to Web Ex to accommodate interested party participation in our reviews, as we cannot have them attend in person. The committee got creative and found a safe and effective way to obtain applicant fingerprints during one-day road trips to Mohave, Coconino, and Yavapai Counties. To date, all but one of the Mohave and Yavapai County vacancies have been filled and all the Coconino vacancies have observations scheduled or appointments by the court pending. We were fortunate that several of the Yuma applicants had their fingerprints completed and they have since been appointed and vacancies were cut in half.

SharePoint:

A recruitment flyer has been posted to SharePoint to assist us in filling our vacancies in Maricopa and Pima Counties. Board members are encouraged to assist us with filling vacancies by referring people who they know that may be interested in joining the FCRB.

Vacancies:

The Phoenix Region vacancy rate at the end of May, decreased, to approximately 14%. The Tucson Region vacancy rate at the end of May was approximately 28%. Both offices continue to have a number of observations and appointments pending that will either maintain or drive their respective vacancy rates down, but the pandemic has had an impact on our recruitment methods and processes.

Projects:

We are continuing to pursue the diversity plan for the FCRB program.

Continuing Education Committee

Speaker: Lori Dennison, *FCRB Program Manager*

Discussed the new training reports. The committee worked last year to update the Volunteer Manual. Lori is currently reviewing the manual and as soon as she is finished with it, the manual will be moved forward to Caroline for review and approval. It will then be presented to the Executive Committee.

The training report has been completed through the end of May. There are not a lot of volunteers showing credits but that could be due to not being able to complete trainings in person due to the pandemic.

Program Manager's Report:

Speaker: Lori Dennison, *FCRB Program Manager*

Sandy Guizzetti, *FCRB Regional Manager*

The FCRB have been holding virtual boards and staff have been working from home. The supervisors and Lori have been spending a lot of time creating schedules. Originally staff was going to be out of the office more frequently and that quickly changed to everyone being out of the office at the same time. Our ITD was amazing at setting VPN up for our staff. The administrative staff, in both offices, have never worked from home before. The administrative staff was working from home within three days of VPN requests being submitted to ITD. They are using all their personal equipment. Admins are using their personal phones for front desk duty, their own computers, and the Program Specialist are also using their own phones to run boards but have work issued laptops. The work from home order was put in place and our staff have been doing so since March 17th. We've only had one admin and supervisor, in the Phoenix office, at any given time. Shantelle is in and out of the office but works from home when possible.

Even though the staff is working from home, they are still reaching all the mandates, every single time. Lori is grateful to the volunteers for being flexible. Using Web Ex has not been the best platform to use for boards. Calls have been dropped and staff have been locked out of their own board meetings. Every time, while you can tell there is frustration, aggravation, and they are stressed, the Program Specialists remain professional. They think quickly and get work done.

As we move forward, the Phoenix office will have three teams and the Tucson office will have two groups. Tucson started their rotation on Monday and Phoenix was supposed to start the rotation on Monday as well but due to the protests there was damage to the Supreme Court building. We've had broken windows and graffiti on the building. Fortunately, only the outside window of Heidi's was broken, and it did not reach the inside window.

As we move toward coming back to the office, there has been a careful examination of the board rooms. Giving thought to the size of the board rooms and how we can safely bring our volunteers back into the building, it will not be possible to house the volunteers and a staff member in the board rooms, with social distancing guidelines.

After giving this a lot of discussion and consideration, virtual boards will take place through the end of the year. Staff was told yesterday, and the rest of the volunteers

will be told Monday. Also, knowing that Web Ex is not the best platform for our needs, we have decided to go with a video format. Microsoft Teams has been considered but it has many limitations and it's not intuitive for staff to use. We are going to test Zoom. Two Tucson boards will test Teams, one Tucson board will test Zoom, and one Phoenix board will be testing Zoom. We received the licenses for Zoom yesterday and the testing will take place within the next two weeks. It seems that Zoom will allow the PS's to have more control over the environment, ex. PS can control who will enter the meeting. The hope is to switch to Zoom, in the near future. There are boards that are scheduled with Web Ex and we will have to figure out how to transition them to Zoom.

SharePoint:

There has not been any movement with SharePoint since March. This is due to the mass exodus from the office and ITD staff focusing on getting all AOC staff working from home and troubleshooting issues that come up. Our ITD team has done a fantastic job of assisting staff with the transition.

One board did not transition correctly but it was taken care of manually. We knew there was a problem immediately and it was fixed.

Child Case Numbers:

May 2020
Cases: 7,022
Children: 12,080

April 2020
Cases: 7,058
Children: 12,128

March 2020
Cases: 7,012
Children: 12,038

May 2019
Cases: 6,994
Children: 11,995

Petitions are down in some counties but up in others. As children go back into the community, there will be a rapid increase in cases, as no one has had 'eyes' on these kids due to the pandemic. Shalom with DCS let Lori know that reporting was down 30% in mid-April. There is concern about the children in our communities with the lockdown and increase in stress due to the pandemic and loss of jobs.

DARP:

DARP is our Dependency Automation Project that allows us to receive, from our local courts, petition information. This will streamline our data entry, reduce input errors, and give us a mechanism that ensures we are not overlooking anything. It has

been implemented and is being piloted in five of our rural counties. We have not experienced any major issues. As soon as we know the staffing patterns and challenges in the coming months, we'll be able to look at the counties to receive this program. Due to how DARP saves time, it will allow staff to concentrate on asks that take longer.

Questions/Comments:

Bruce asks Lori if we will consider taking our next Executive and State Board meetings to the Zoom format. Lori answers saying that we will be taking it to the Zoom platform as Teams is not working well for large groups.

Division/AOC Report

Speaker: Caroline Lauth-Owens, *Director, Dependent Children's Services Division*

Summary of Discussion:

Caroline reiterated Lori's comments and complimented FCRB staff and volunteers on transitioning, nearly overnight, to the new virtual format after 40 years of conducting boards in-person. While some issues arose, there weren't many, and everyone jumped in and was able to transition smoothly. Thank you to staff and volunteers for flexibility.

Legislative Session:

The legislature has adjourned. Not much has happened with the bills that we were tracking or, more importantly, our budget request. There are rumors that they will hold a special session.

Dependency Alternative Program (DAP) Initiative:

DAP comes from the Pima County courts. Pima has won a couple awards for this initiative, and they will be granted another award from The National Association of Court Management.

DAP front loads the system and allows them to work with cases before a dependency petition is filed to provide services to families as soon as possible. This is in hopes that the dependency petition will not have to be filed. The Chief Justice has acknowledged the initiative as a success and has added it to his Strategic Plan. It is now DCSD's responsibility to roll this initiative out statewide.

There were five counties scheduled for a May discussion about DAP and implementation in their counties. Due to Covid-19, the meeting was canceled. A meeting with Mohave County was rescheduled and they have had their initiation into DAP, and we will be working with them to get this up and running.

DCS is on board with us and the DAP initiative and are interested in the statewide use and consistency of DAP. We are excited about this collaboration.

We are working to set up another virtual meeting with four or five more counties to discuss DAP.

Title IV-E Reimbursement:

This program allows counties to receive partial reimbursement for parent and child representation. The counties were allowed to go back to 2019 for their initial claim. Approximately twenty-nine million dollars was claimed for reimbursement statewide. By the time the formula was applied to calculate Title IV-E eligible children and families, etc., a total of approximately six-million dollars was sent back to the counties for their claims. The counties have now submitted their 3rd Quarter claims for this year and we will be pushing out, approximately, \$1.6 million to the counties. As they receive this money, we are excited to see what initiatives they put in to place so that we are ensuring families receive quality representation. Many counties are talking about doing multi-system/multi-partner initiatives like DAP or possibly some other program. Hopefully this will have an impact with how many children are able to stay home safely, with services. For those children who aren't able to stay at home, parents will receive enhanced representation that will assist them with having their children returned.

Old Business:

N/A

New Business:

N/A

Call to the Public:

Lina Wallen would like to give kudos to the FCRB staff about how they are handling all the meetings. Also, kudos to Charlie Gray for filling the board in Coconino County.

Julie Gasaway welcomes the members from local boards that have joined in for the State Board Meeting today and invites them to attend future State Board meetings.

The committee meetings are slated to start at 11:00 a.m. but since the board is ending early, it is suggested to take a quick break and meet back up at 10:30 a.m.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 10:13 a.m.

Future meeting dates:

- ↪ *Saturday, November 7, 2020 State Board Meeting (via ZOOM)*
- ↪ *Saturday, March 6, 2021 State Board Meeting (Zoom)*
- ↪ *Saturday, June 5, 2021 State Board Meeting (TBD)*
- ↪ *Saturday, September 11, 2021 Executive Committee Meeting Only (TBD)*
- ↪ *Saturday, November 6, 2021 State Board Meeting (TBD)*

LOCAL BOARD MEMBERS

You have been provided this State Board information for the following reasons:

- 1) As a mechanism to inform you of State Board meetings and activities. Local board members are always welcome to attend. As a local board member, you only need to R.S.V.P. if you wish to attend (reimbursement for miles, meals, and lodging no provided).
- 2) Local board members are encouraged to participate in State Board meetings; however, local board members do **not** have voting privileges.
- 3) If you are interested in a committee project, please contact Lori Dennison at (602) 452-3409.